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ISABELLA ;

OR,

THE ROBBERS;

A Poetical Tale of the Olden Times:

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

WILLIAM M'LAREN;

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF TANNAHILL," &c.

LONDON:

1828.

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ISABELLA ;

OR,

THE ROBBERS.

“ **O** FATHER ! shut not thus your door,
“ Unkindly, on the houseless poor ;
“ No blood-stained angry ruffian I,
“ To bid your wife and children die,
“ But phrenzied sorrow’s sickly child,
“ A wanderer ’midst the pathless wild.”

The generous glow of pity pressed
The hermit to receive his guest,
But when the crackling faggots’ aid
The virgin bloom of youth displayed,
The anchorite, with averted eyes,
Suspicious, to the maid replies :

“ Unhappy daughter of the gloom,
“ Why seek ’mong alpine snows a tomb ;
“ Has slighted love or cold disdain
“ In phrenzy, fixed thy tortured brain ;
“ Or what untimely withering woe
“ Disturbs thy breast of virgin snow ?”

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The mourner turned her weeping eyes
 To where the fount of mercy lies —
 And thanked the saints—and blessed the hour
 That led her to the hermit's bower,
 Unconscious of its holy rest—
 Then thus the wondering sire addressed :—

“ O father! hear a tale that might
 “ Appal the callous ear of night ;
 “ But, shuddering, turn not thus aside—
 “ Not mine the blood this garment dyed,
 “ Nor mine the hand that struck the blow,
 “ And bade the crimson current flow.

“ Where rolls Lochlomond's crystal flood
 “ My murdered father's cottage stood ;
 “ No hoarded wealth was his to lure
 “ The midnight ruffians to the door ;
 “ But I, his all of fortune given,
 “ The relic of a saint in heaven.

“ The glimm'ring moon-beam's light impress'd.
 “ Her shadows on the mountain's breast ;
 “ And all throughout the peaceful gloom
 “ Was tranquil as an infant's tomb,
 “ When louder than the torrent's roar,
 “ The wolves of night assailed our door.

" The unbolted latch resistless driven,
 " Admits the foes of earth and heaven,
 " Who round their ruffian leader crowd,
 " A wretch—who'd spill an infant's blood,
 " And stare upon the mangled corse,
 " Nor dread revenge—nor feel remorse.

" Form'd in creative Nature's wrath,
 " To smile at sacrilege or death,
 " His eyes, with bushy eye-brows bound,
 " Cast a malignant glance around,
 " That heaven, and earth, and hell defied,
 " Then thus deliberately cried :

" ' Father ! we revellers of the night
 " ' Dread nothing but the morning's light ;
 " ' The clock has told the midnight hour,
 " ' The all thou hast is in our power,
 " ' Wilt thou resign thy treasured store,
 " ' Or see the light of heaven no more ?

" ' The cock that bids the peasant rise,
 " ' Seals softly our nocturnal eyes ;
 " ' We minister the will of fate,
 " ' Nor dally in a long debate—
 " ' Dost see this crusted scymitar—
 " ' 'Tis seldom seen in bloodless war.'

" Whene'er the ruthless villain spoke,
 " His voice upon the silence broke,
 " So hoarse, discordant, full of dread,
 " That hope and heavenly mercy fled,
 " And bade the victims of his power
 " Anticipate a dreadful hour.

" We give our all, and hope to prove,
 " By tears and smiles, the miscreant's love ;
 " But what a partial father's fears,
 " Or what a frantic maiden's tears,
 " When lawless rage, without control,
 " Raves madly in the savage soul ?

" Unawed by heaven—unchecked by power,
 " The ruffians, at the midnight hour,
 " Their eager search for wealth pursue,
 " (For wealth we never wished nor knew,)
 " While imprecations, wild and dread,
 " Are thundered on my father's head.

" The search is o'er—the table spread—
 " Their thirst allayed—their hunger fed—
 " The generous liquor set apart
 " To cheer the lonely wanderer's heart,
 " The ebbing tide of rage supplied,
 " When thus again their leader cried :

“ ‘ Why, father, say no wealth is thine ?

“ ‘ This wench is worth Potosi’s mine ;

“ ‘ Her lovely eyes, angelic fair,

“ ‘ Might tempt a hermit from his prayer,

“ ‘ And bid him in some merrier mood,

“ ‘ Renounce his beads and solitude.

“ ‘ What pity that so sweet a flower,

“ ‘ Should wither in this lonely bower !

“ ‘ Those eyes, though bathed in sorrow’s wave,

“ ‘ Might light an exiled robber’s cave ;

“ ‘ Come to my arms, my pretty dove,

“ ‘ And feel the warm delights of love.

“ ‘ What ! does the colour leave thy cheek —

“ ‘ Thy eye no amorous passion speak ?

“ ‘ A brighter bloom will flush thy face

“ ‘ When locked within my fond embrace :”

“ Then stretched his hands, with murders dyed,

“ And dragged me fainting to his side.

“ Repulsive horror o’er me creeps,

“ The life-blood in my bosom sleeps,

“ I feel the chilly hand of death,

“ And struggle for expiring breath,

“ While all that yet of life remains,

“ The ruffian’s rude embrace sustains.

“ My father’s brow is knit in frowns,
 “ His heart a noble impulse owns ;
 “ His frantic arm is raised on high ;
 “ The work of death is in his eye ;
 “ Then quick descends the gleaming dart,
 “ That pierced the groaning villain’s heart.

“ Another hand the blow returned,
 “ My father fell—unwept—unmourned—
 “ Save by the tears these eyes impressed,
 “ With anguish on the bleeding breast,
 “ That fondly with affection sighed
 “ A prayer to Heaven for me—and died.

“ ‘ Revenge !’ the expiring leader cried—
 “ ‘ Revenge !’ the savage band replied ;
 “ Around the blazing brands are driven,
 “ By hands that mock the wrath of heaven,
 “ And ere the sunbeams warm the skies,
 “ A ruined mass our cottage lies.

“ I, while revengeful rage repressed
 “ The meaner passions of the breast,
 “ Sought from the friendly shades of night,
 “ A shelter from the ruffians’ sight,
 “ And guided by some heavenly power
 “ Have gained this lone sequestered bower.

" But now the houseless child of woe,
 " Nor friendship's tear nor love I know,
 " But like a bark upon the wave,
 " When angry winds tempestuous rave,
 " Must wander where the fates incline—
 " Nor hope, nor home, nor friends are mine."

The frantic tale of sorrow done—
 The hermit's heart by pity won—
 His bosom heaves unwonted sighs,
 Unwonted tears start from his eyes;
 But ere he checked the friendly tide,
 He kindly to the maid replied :—

" Then ne'er again unhappy stray
 " The gloomy heath's untrodden way,
 " Nor ever feel, unsullied flower !
 " The chilling blast's malignant power,
 " But rest within this lone retreat,
 " Impervious to the wanderer's feet.

" When morn her ruddy light has shed,
 " Along the snowy mountain's head,
 " I'll hasten down the craggy steep—
 " Nay, injured maiden, do not weep ;
 " No hostile footsteps e'er intrude
 " Upon this lonely solitude.

“ The human heart, by cares oppressed,
 “ Oft sees the worst—neglects the best—
 “ Through the dark medium of her tears,
 “ Anticipates a thousand fears,
 “ Neglects the good which Heaven bestows,
 “ And magnifies imagined woes.

“ Hope, brilliant gem of heavenly birth,
 “ Celestial friend of man on earth,
 “ Whispers that Mercy’s kind decree,
 “ (In pity to the world and thee,)
 “ Has marred the malice of the dart,
 “ That sought thy honoured father’s heart.

“ If dead, his spirit yet demands
 “ The friendly aid of human hands,
 “ Nor must his honoured dust remain
 “ Unburied on the ensanguined plain,
 “ But holy rites and prayers be given
 “ To mitigate the wrath of Heaven.

“ Thy weary feet and wasting woes,
 “ Require refreshment and repose,
 “ Then, maiden, take this potent draught,
 “ Its virtues, (from experience taught,)
 “ A soothing influence will impart
 “ To lull misfortune’s galling smart.”

There is a holy charm in truth,
 That wins the hearts of age and youth,
 The mourner's eyes its power confessed—
 She takes the draught—inclines to rest,
 Upon the hermit's rushy bed,
 Her wearied limbs and aching head.

And now secure from foes she sleeps,
 Nor sorrow sighs, nor pity weeps,
 Her thoughts are fixed on former bliss;
 Her father's smile—her lover's kiss—
 And every range that fancy takes
 Some kindred scene of feeling wakes.

The holy hermit's evening prayer
 Commends to heaven the sleeping fair,
 An added faggot warms the floor—
 A secret latch secures the door,
 And bright the moon-beams serve to guide
 His footsteps down the mountain's side.

He speeds along—a distant light
 Gleams faintly through the gloom of night;
 He stops—the fading light withdrew;
 He moves again—it brighter grew;
 And fancy guides the flitting ray
 To where the ruined cottage lay.

He counts his beads—his fears subside—
 He journeys on—and gaily cried,
 'Tis but some flitting meteor light
 The midnight wanderer to affright—
 It moves along—it cannot be
 The ruined cot of charity.

But see—what youth with hasty tread,
 Has scared the sky-lark from his bed?
 He seeks the lonely path that leads
 To where the hermit tells his beads,
 When morning o'er the mountain bends,
 Or night in dusky shade descends.

The hermit knows the virtuous youth,
 (An emblem of unshaken truth)
 Surprise lends vigour to their feet,
 With hastier steps they closer meet,
 And "Hail, my son," the hermit cried,
 "Hail, reverend sire," the youth replied.

To whom the hermit thus again,
 Disturbed to see the youth in pain,
 "What furrowing clouds of wild despair,
 "Have marked thy morning face with care,
 "Or why distempered hast thou fled
 "Thy home, thy kindred, and thy bed?"

With bashful looks the youth began,
And thus addressed the holy man:--

" O father! though the snows of age
" Be wreathed upon thy head,
" And all the flattering dreams of youth
" Be now for ever fled ;

" Yet if thy heart, in life's gay hour,
" E'er felt the pangs of love,
" Indulgent hear a youth complain,
" Nor frowning disapprove.

" Adorned with every witching charm,
" By silver Lomond grew
" The loveliest flower that e'er imbibed
" The shining morning dew.

" Hast thou the budding rose surveyed,
" At orient morning's break ?
" Then thou hast seen the crimson hue
" That bloomed upon her cheek.

" Or hast thou seen the lily's leaf,
" With dewy tears oppressed ?
" Then thou hast seen the snowy white
" Of Isabella's breast.

- “ Well might the hoary hermit sage
“ Forget his evening prayer,
“ The radiant glances of her eyes
“ In solitude to share.
- “ 'Though cold and callous was his heart,
“ As Winter's midnight hour,
“ His frequent unavailing sighs
“ Would own their magic power.
- “ For Isabel was like the morn,
“ Whose bright reviving ray,
“ Bids the gay flowerets lift their heads,
“ To decorate the day.
- “ Long, long I loved the beauteous maid,
“ And long in secret sighed,
“ And oft I wished to press my suit
“ But feared to be denied.
- “ Till bolder by indulgence grown,
“ I told my amorous tale ;
“ And found the honest words of truth
“ O'er Isabel prevail.
- “ 'Then soon was fixed the happy day,
“ Our guileless hearts should prove,

“ Affectionate—the entrancing joys

“ Of hymeneal love.

“ But frightful dark prophetic dreams,

“ The harbingers of care,

“ Have checked my hopes, and chilled my blood,

“ And filled me with despair.

“ Last night, when all were wrapt in sleep,

“ The warning vision came,

“ And twice I dreamed it o’er again,

“ And twice it was the same.

“ Methought upon a bank I lay,

“ With summer flowers o’erspread,

“ And Isabel upon my breast

“ Reclined her drooping head.

“ The yellow tints of parting day,

“ Still lingered in the west,

“ And soft the balmy air reclined

“ Upon the violet’s breast.

“ The day retired—the Queen of Night

“ Rode through the cloudless skies,

“ Bright as affection’s glistening tears,

“ In parting lover’s eyes.

“ 'Twas boundless bliss—'twas ecstasy,
 “ Beyond description's power,
 “ To clasp an angel to my heart,
 “ In this luxurious hour !

“ But, ah ! 'twas transient as the bow,
 “ That decks the verge of heaven,
 “ When watery clouds and sunny showers,
 “ By warring winds are driven.

“ The night grew cold—the winds blew loud !
 “ The changeful sky o'ercast,
 “ And sounds, terrific as the grave,
 “ Came groaning on the blast.

“ My Isabel, with sudden dread,
 “ Sprung, screaming, from my side,
 “ And, quick as thought, the frightful gloom
 “ Our parting forms divide.

“ O'ercome by fear, and sick with woe,
 “ The ice-cold ground I pressed ;
 “ When suddenly a spirit came,
 “ And thus my ear addressed :

“ ‘ Rise, rise, sluggard youth ! why stay loitering alone,
 “ ‘ When destruction raves wild at thy Isabel's home ?

“ ‘ The demons of night, now exulting in power,
 “ ‘ Have entered her house, and have crowded her floor,
 “ ‘ And the maid to the arms of their chief has been
 pressed,

“ ‘ With a tear in her eye, and a sigh at her breast.

“ ‘ The hand of her father is brandished on high,
 “ ‘ He has love at his heart—he has death in his eye ;
 “ ‘ One glance to his angelic daughter he gave,
 “ ‘ One prayer to the power who in mercy can save,
 “ ‘ Then quickly descending the edge of his dart,
 “ ‘ Has furrowed a path to the miscreant’s heart.

“ ‘ But the hand that has opened the life-gushing wound,
 “ ‘ Is cold as the grave, and is stretched on the ground,
 “ ‘ And the maid it has often caressed with delight,
 “ ‘ Now wanders forlorn like a shade of the night,
 “ ‘ Then rise, sluggard youth ! nor stay loitering here,
 “ ‘ Till the earth be her bed, and the snow be her bier :

“ ‘ But cross not the floor, where her father lies cold,
 “ ‘ Till your tale to the hermit of Banoch you’ve told,
 “ ‘ He is gifted with wisdom, and favoured by Heaven,
 “ ‘ And will give you the counsel that I would have given,
 “ ‘ Had the cock’s early clarion not ushered the day,
 “ ‘ And called me in speed to my prison of clay—
 “ ‘ ’Tis the shade of her mother that warns thee away.’

“ Disturbed by the warning voice,
“ I started from my sleep,
“ And wondered how a phantasy
“ Could injure me so deep.

“ I slept—again the vision came,
“ More frightful than before;
“ I waked—and found it still the same,
“ But triply coloured o’er.

“ Large balls of sweet bedew my head,
“ I feel the chill of age,
“ And trembling with prophetic dread,
“ Have sought thy hermitage.

“ Now, father, as the spirit said,
“ The gifts of heaven are thine,
“ The meaning of my frightful dream,
“ In charity divine.”

“ Hush, impious youth,” the hermit cried,
“ Let time the will of heaven decide,
“ It fits not hoary age to hear,
“ Of plighted faith and vows sincere,
“ Sublimar thoughts than these engage,
“ The tempered tongue, and ear of age.

" 'Tis not in solitude to share,
 " The chilling breath of morning air,
 " That thus I leave my calm retreat,
 " And sheath in snows my aged feet ;
 " Then follow where I lead the way,
 " And hope to see a brighter day."

The wondering youth in silence trode
 Behind the holy man of God ;
 The ruddy morning's welcome light
 Usurps dominion o'er the night :
 But still no smoky columns rise
 To check their hopes, or dim the skies.

But, see ! along this winding path,
 What signs of cruelty or death ;
 The spangled snows are newly trod
 And deeply tinged with human blood,
 That to the watchful hermit's eye,
 Tells guilt has fled, and death is nigh.

The gaping door receives the pair,
 But, mercy ! what a sight was there,
 The slippery floor is crimsoned o'er
 With smoking brands and human gore,
 And all that owns destruction's sway,
 Around in scattered ruins lay.

And hark! a groan—'tis o'er—'twas death—
 An effort of expiring breath—
 The father lies along the ground,
 (The blood still oozing from his wound,)
 Cold as the polar winds that blow
 O'er rocks of ice and fields of snow.

The hermit lifts him from the ground,
 With skilful hand he probes the wound ;
 The flattering beams of hope arise ;
 With faint and doubtful voice he cries,
 “ No cruel wound of death was here,
 “ Had skilful hands in time been near.”

A warmer couch is instant spread—
 A softer pillow rests his head—
 A potent balsam checks the blood,
 That feebly fed the ensanguined flood—
 A cordial drop, with caution given,
 Recals the flitting soul from heaven.

The youth retires—he comes again—
 His looks pourtray his inward pain—
 He gasps for breath—essays to speak—
 His tongue no sounds articulate ;
 Repeated efforts thus expressed
 The anguish of his throbbing breast.

“ O father ! do not deem that I
“ Feel less than warm ecstatic joy,
“ To see the influence of thy art,
“ Beat at this honoured father’s heart ;
“ His life restored repays thy toil—
“ But where is Isabel the while.

“ Impelled by love’s almighty power,
“ I’ve called her name in every bower,
“ I’ve strove, with anxious care, to trace
“ Her footsteps in the snow’s embrace,
“ But all my eager search is vain,
“ And all my fears return again.

“ The maid had with her sire remained,
“ If force had not her will constrained ;
“ Half of my warning dream is read,
“ The other fills my soul with dread,
“ For sure the lovely maid is pressed,
“ Reluctant to some some savage breast.

“ Then, father, rouse the country wide,
“ Let footmen run, and horsemen ride ;
“ Search every deep sequestered glen ;
“ Search all the secret haunts of men ;
“ Let not a flower so lovely fair,
“ Be doomed to bondage and despair.”

With looks benign the hermit ey'd
 The youth ; and briefly thus replied—
 “ Let nought thy eager steps restrain
 “ Till once the hermitage you gain,
 “ There find thy sweet angelic flower
 “ Unsullied yet by human power.”

Not faster flies the mountain deer,
 When hounds pursue, and death is near ;
 Not faster through the yielding air,
 When urged by hunger and despair,
 Flies the swift hawk upon its prey,
 Than clears the youth the distant way.

And now his glowing fingers catch
 The spring that moves the secret latch,
 Now in ecstatic gaze he stands,
 Now gently pressed her lily hands,
 Now, bending with devotion, sips
 The nectar from her dewy lips.

O beauty ! thou hast power to move
 The hermit heart of age to love,
 And bid his stagnant pulses roll
 Tumultuous through his feverish soul ;
 For who can see and yet defy
 The magic of thy laughing eye !

“Awake, my love!” Constantine cried,—

His voice in gentle whispers died,

“Awake! the chilly morning seeks

“To wanton on thy glowing cheeks;

“Mercy impatient waits to bind

“The sorrows of thy wounded mind.

“Ah no! sleep on, angelic flower,

“Bright essence of creative power!

“Sleep on! sleep on! thy holy rest

“By some celestial power is bliss’d;

“Then rude the hand would break the smile

“That plays upon thy cheek the while.”

O Love! whoe’er has felt thy power,

Luxuriant in some blissful hour,

When all the ruder passions sleep,

And thou alone hast power to weep,

Or laugh, or sigh the soul away,

Beneath thy all-subduing sway,

May guess, but cannot tell the bliss,

Ecstatic, in an hour like this.

She wakes—her dream of bliss is o’er;

The horrors of the night before,

Rush like a tempest on her soul,

And bids her frantic eye-balls roll,

And all their restless motion seem

Terrific as a murderer’s dream.

" Away," with frantic voice she cried,
 And scornfully Constantine eyed,
 " Away, relentless ruffian rude,
 " Could nought allay thy thirst of blood,
 " But the best blood that ever ran,
 " Emaculate through the veins of man.

" See, see ! upon the ground he lies !
 " See ! now he mounts his kindred skies !
 " Hark, hark ! he calls on me the while,
 " With dulcet voice and angel smile ;
 " I come, I come : O spirit ! stay,
 " I follow where thou guid'st the way.

" He's gone—O ! wilt thou sainted sire,
 " When placed amidst the heavenly choir,
 " Revisit e'er this earth again,
 " To sooth in dreams thy daughter's pain,
 " Of every other stay bereft—
 " A weary weeping orphan left."

She reels—she faints—her sorrows rest
 Upon Constantine's throbbing breast,
 Who, almost dead himself to see
 The maid in this extremity,
 Sighed out a suppliant prayer to heaven—
 The aid solicited is given.

For, hark ! these long and deep-drawn sighs,
 That sob convulsed and quickly dies,
 These burning tears that slowly chase
 Each other down her mournful face,
 Are earnest of returning sense,
 And softer sorrows influence.

Again her weary eyelids part,
 And tears relieve her burthened heart,
 She starts anew with glad surprise,
 And timidly Constantine eyes,
 Then thus with doubtful words expressed
 The mixed emotions of her breast.

“ Constantine ! no !—yes, yes, ’tis thee—

“ Ah ! this is more than charity,

“ To seek me in this holy bower,

“ And sooth me in this dreadful hour ;

“ But, ah ! thy kindness can’t illume

“ The frightful horrors of the tomb.

“ He lives !” Constantine quick replied,

And pressed her closer to his side,

“ He lives—I felt his pulses play,

“ Beneath his moistened skin of clay,

“ And heard the throbbings of his heart

“ Confess the skillful hermit’s art.”

" He lives ! he breathes ! what ! Did you say
 " You felt his feeble pulses play ?
 " And heard the throbbings of his heart
 " Confess the skilful hermit's art ?
 " Ah, no ! Constantine, do not try
 " To sooth with hopes that soon must die."

" He lives—by all the saints I swear
 " That heard thee lisp thy infant prayer ;
 " Then haste, my angel love, away,
 " And heavenly mercies will obey,
 " For sure thy seraph breath will bring
 " Reviving health upon its wing."

Swift as an arrow from a bow,
 When urged against a distant foe,
 Swift as the meteor light is driven,
 Athwart the starry arch of heaven,
 Adown the mountain steep they glide,
 Like nimble coursers, side by side.

The cautious hermit stops their speed,
 And thus, in hurried whispers, said ;
 " The spirit of celestial birth
 " Still hovering hangs 'twixt heaven and earth,
 " Let no emotion then betray
 " Nor hope, nor fear, nor ecstasy."

The weeping maid in silence crept
To where her honoured father slept,
Nor dared to speak—nor dared to sigh—
Nor stopped to wipe her glistening eye,
But, silent, bending by his side,
Her solemn *Ave Maria* said.

In three short days the father's smile
Repaid the watchful hermit's toil—
In three short weeks the hermit's prayer
In bliss unites the happy pair;
Then, cheerful, sought his lone abode,
Devoting all his thoughts to God.

EMMA ;

OR,

THE CRUEL FATHER.

“ O LET me yet one little night,
“ Beneath your roof remain ;
“ Loud, loud, and threat’ning, howls the blast,
“ And heavy falls the rain.

“ O let me yet, one little night,
“ A Father’s pity crave,
“ Nor make the wild untrodden heath
“ The sickly Emma’s grave.

“ Canst thou behold my sickly form,
“ And hear my bursting sighs,
“ And drive me out, unsheltered thus,
“ Beneath the midnight skies ?

" No ! father dear, in mercy kind,
 " Renounce your oath severe,
 " And let me here a shelter find
 " Till dawning morn appear.

" 'Tis but this dreary night I seek
 " Beneath your roof to bide,
 " And for my weeping infant's sake,
 " I must not be denied."

Unmoved the cruel father stands,
 Wild flash'd his furious eyes,
 And foaming mad with savage rage,
 Indignantly replies :

" Hence—from my sight—detested wretch !
 " Thy tears, thy prayers are vain,
 " For night, nor hour, beneath this roof
 " Thou never shalt remain.

" An outcast beggar, base and vile,
 " May none your wants supply,
 " But every heart detest your crime,
 " With curses deep as I.

“Nay, hold me not—vile reptile wretch!

“But hie thee to the gloom;

“And may the dark terrific night

“Accelerate thy doom.”

Then, frowning wild, with savage rage,

Deep wounded in his pride,

He spurn'd the lovely suppliant fair

With vengeance from his side.

Ejected thus her father's house,

What shelter can she gain?

Or how defend her infant, from

The tempest and the rain?

For ne'er before did tempest dire

The lovely fair betide;

For Emma's sire had wealth in store,

And Emma was his pride.

And like a lovely flower she grew,

Beneath his guiding eye,

Unsullied by the slightest blast

That chills the midnight sky.

And long his kind parental care
A mother's loss supplied ;
Who soon as Emma saw the light,
In pining sickness died.

And well did Emma's filial heart
A father's love repay ;
For Emma's heart was form'd for truth,
And could not disobey.

Till gentle love, with winning smiles,
Assailed her virgin heart,
And bade her feel a father's rage,
With unrelenting smart.

For William came, a kindred youth,
Of every worth possess'd,
That ever waked a female sigh,
Or warm'd a virgin's breast.

And Emma, too, was Beauty's pride,
Adorn'd by all the charms
That ever fann'd the torch of love,
Or fill'd a lover's arms.

The mutual flame that warm'd their hearts
 They labour'd to conceal,
 But still their eyes confess'd a wish
 Their tongues could not reveal.*

And soon the jealous father saw
 The kindling passion rise,
 The blushing face, the ardent glance
 That sparkled in their eyes.

And long he strove, with cautious care,
 Its^t fervour to subdue ;
 But still the soft intrusive flame
 With double ardour grew.

Then, with a guardian's stern command,
 Their passion to deride,
 He forced the fond reluctant youth,
 To brave the ocean's tide.

But vain his care ; for Emma heard
 The cruel order given,
 And swore eternal love and truth
 Before the throne of Heaven.

* This verse is slightly altered from Mallet.

The holy priest, who joined their hands,
 Was cautioned to conceal
 The pious deed, till William came
 The secret to reveal.

Three little nights the amorous youth
 Caressed his blushing bride ;
 But the fourth envious morning rose
 To bear him through the tide.

Foreboding doubts and anxious cares
 Their lab'ring bosoms move,
 When William thus, with borrowed smiles,
 Addressed his drooping love :

“ Cheer up, my love ! the lamp of day
 “ Flames cloudless o'er the main,
 “ Although his morning march began
 “ In tempests and in rain.

“ A kind prophetic omen this,
 “ That all our sorrow's o'er,
 “ We soon shall meet with brighter hopes,
 “ And meet to part no more.

“ For when the winds tempestuous rise,

“ The ocean to deform,

“ Thy pious prayers, for safety sent,

“ Will guide me through the storm.

“ And when the sun, in torrid climes,

“ Flames burning o’er my head,

“ Kind Heaven will form, my weeping love,

“ A shelter and a shed.

“ Then weep not thus, my Emma dear,

“ Nor for my absence mourn,

“ For ere the daisies deck the spring,

“ Again I will return.

“ Then no ambitious angry sire,

“ To gratify his pride,

“ Shall dare, by stern tyrannic power,

“ Our fortunes to divide.”

Fast folded in his manly arms,

He strained her to his heart,

Till the stern father’s jealous care,

Had warned them both to part.

Then waving sad her lily hand,
The weeping fair withdrew,
And sobbing saw her absent lord
Receding from her view.

As when a lovely fragrant flower
The wintry winds assail,
Hangs drooping down its wither'd head,
And bends beneath the gale ;

So Emma, 'neath her father's frown,
Pined 'lone the hours away ;
The youthful bloom of summer fled,
And wither'd with decay.

And oft when silent setting eve
Gleamed faintly o'er the vale,
She sought the bower where William first
Revealed his amorous tale.

And pining mourned the cruel fate,
That doomed her youth to prove
A mother's pains, and nurse a pledge
Of absent William's love.

For when bright Cynthia nine times came
To fill her silver horn,
Beneath a kind domestic's care
Her lovely babe was born.

As timorous swains, at warning signs,
Stare wide with wild surprise,
So stared the sire, when first he heard
The screaming infant's cries.

And Emma, 'neath his awful frown,
With trembling fear confessed
Her wedded love, and owned the babe
That hung upon her breast.

In vain she pleads her William's worth—
Her faded sickly form—
The ruthless father drives her forth,
A victim to the storm.

Nor strayed the exile long nor far,
Beneath the inclement sky,
Before her fainting weary limbs
Demands a place to lie.

A stately elm, whose leafless arms
 Hung o'er the pathway side,
 Was all the shelter and the shed
 The moonless night supplied.

There, stretched beneath the frightful gloom,
 Her clay-cold lips address'd
 The lovely, sweet, unconscious babe,
 That hung upon her breast :

“ Hush, hush, my boy, no longer I
 “ The furious tempest brave,
 “ This night thy mother's breast must be
 “ Thy cradle or thy grave.

“ Perhaps, when morn's reviving beams
 “ Has warmed the eastern sky,
 “ Thou'lt find a happier shelter from
 “ Some friendly passer by.

“ But morn's reviving beams to me
 “ Nor health nor hope impart ;
 “ For tyrant Death, with fell Disease,
 “ Tug deadly at my heart.

“ But thou, my lovely infant boy,
“ Wilt live in other years,
“ And visit oft thy mother’s tomb,
“ To bathe it with thy tears.

“ Nor wilt thou bear, sweet injured babe,
“ A hated bastard’s name,
“ For soon thy father will be here,
“ His lovely boy to claim.

“ See—now dejected and alone,
“ He looks across the tide,
“ And frets to feel the adverse winds
“ That keep him from my side.

“ Now—now the vessel gains the port
“ And now he mounts his steed,
“ Nor angry winds, nor dashing rains,
“ Retard his courser’s speed.

“ O haste, my William ! haste, and come,
“ Thy Emma waits thee here ;
“ Haste, and revive thy drooping love,
“ Or bear her to her bier.”

Prophetic hopes of Emma these,
For William left the tide,
And rode impatient through the gloom,
To claim his lovely bride.

Firm seated on his nimble steed,
The rapid courser flew
With eagle's speed—the lagging winds
In vain his steps pursue.

But faster far are William's thoughts,
Who now in fancy sips
The soft delicious nectar from
His Emma's dewy lips.

But check thy thoughts, unhappy youth,
Cold, cold, thy Emma lies,
And thou art come, this dreary night,
To close her life-gone eyes.

The courser speeds—dark through the gloom
The castle lights appear,
Where William left, with anxious thoughts,
His lovely Emma dear.

The courser stops—with wild affright
An infant's voice he hears,
And faintly, through the midnight gloom,
A female form appears.

“What wretch,” the wondering William cried,
“From every shelter cast,
“Art thou, who bathes thy weary limbs
“Beneath the midnight blast.”

No sigh, no moan, no answer made,
All keen perceptions fled ;
The youth drew near, and in his arms,
Supports her drooping head.

Cold, cold, as winter's icy blast,
The dying victim lay,
And faint and slowly at her heart
The feeble pulses play.

“What sad untimely withering woe,
“Unhappy fair,” he cried,
“Has doom'd thee, and thy infant babe,
“Beneath the storm to bide.”

" Whoe'er thou art, poor exiled wretch,
 " No longer tarry here,
 " A softer pillow waits thy head
 " Where yonder lights appear.

" If pining sickness be your lot,
 " Or poverty you bear,
 " Reviving health and hope are thine
 " Beneath my Emma's care."

Then gently in his manly arms,
 With pious haste he bore
 Her faded form, and panting, gain'd
 The bolted castle's door.

And loud his well-remembered voice
 Resounded through the hall ;
 The sleepless father opes the door,
 Obedient to the call.

" Help, help," he cried, " my kinsman dear,
 " No time for welcome spare ;
 " Bid Emma come, this screaming babe
 " Requires her gentle care."

In wondering mute attentive gaze,
 The guilty father stands,
 The blood retreats back to his heart,
 The light drops from his hands.

A servant came, who Emma lov'd,
 And scream'd with loud alarms,
 " 'Tis Emma's self, unhappy youth,
 " Who lies within your arms.

" This night her father drove her forth,
 " Nor durst her maids pursue ;
 " Now low she lies, sweet lady fair,
 " And dies for love of you."

As stands the swain, when lightnings dire
 Strike dead his destined bride,
 So stood the youth, in phrenzied woe,
 By dying Emma's side.

" O ope," he cried, " my Emma dear,
 " Ope, ope thine eyes, and see
 " Thy faithful William safe returned,
 " To bless thy babe and thee."

As angels smile on dying saints,
 And welcome them to bliss,
 So Emma smiled, and turned to feel,
 And welcome William's kiss.

But short the transport that it gave,
 Soon, soon, the bliss is o'er,
 A feeble sigh—a lengthened groan,
 And Emma was no more.

Long stood the youth in silent woe,
 A monument of grief,
 Nor tears, nor sighs, nor words, afford
 His phrenzied soul relief.

Till wilder, grief-subduing rage,
 His altered face deforms
 Terrific as the awful gloom
 Of midnight thunder-storms.

Where art thou, hoary, savage wretch?"
 With thundering voice he cried,
 "This night, within thy guilty heart,
 "My poinard must be dyed."

“ Then strike,” the homicide replied,
“ Thy fury I defy ;
“ For, by my woes, ’tis hell to live,
“ And happiness to die.”

“ Then live—detested and abhorred,”
The weeping mourner said,
And silent hid within its sheath,
The harmless shining blade.

Now hushed the tempest of his soul,
A softer woe returned,
And, bending o’er his Emma’s corse,
He thus unhappy mourned :

“ Ah ! lovely Emma, sainted dear !
“ Where now the sparkling eye ?
“ And where the softly crimson’d cheek,
“ That shamed the rose’s die ?

“ And where the cheerful dulcet voice,
“ That used with smiles to say,
“ The threat’ning frown of weeping love,
“ Will see a brighter day.

" Is this the day, unhappy fair,
 " To which thy fancy sped,
 " And these th' officious maids, whose hands
 " Must deck thy bridal bed.

" Ah! Emma, no!—Far other cares
 " Thy weeping maids employ :
 " Some careful spread thy winding sheet,
 " Some guide thy infant boy.

" Tho' faded now, in silent death,
 " Thy last angelic smile
 " Still lingers with a fond regard,
 " And beckons me the while.

" And soon I come, sweet injured fair,
 " Life's angry troubles o'er ;
 " We soon shall meet with brighter hopes,
 And meet to part no more."

With solemn, slow, reluctant steps,
 The mournful youth withdrew,
 But often turned, and often paused,
 His Emma's corse to view.

And now the horror-haunted sire,
 Laments what he has done,
And, raving, tells his Emma's worth,
 And doats upon her son.

And still, when slumbers close his eyes,
 Her lovely form appears,
And suppliant begs a father's love,
 With warm persuasive tears.

No other form his eye regards,
 No hopes his bosom cheer,
But all within is dark and wild's
 The winter of the year.

And oft he calls on welcome death,
 His weary life to take,
And hates to live, but dreads to die,
 For injur'd beauty's sake.

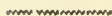
And still beneath the spreading elm,
 Where sainted Emma lay,
Their vows of constancy and truth
 The village lovers pay.

No rude unhallowed birds of night
Beneath its foliage rest ;
But yearly, 'mong its leafy boughs
The stock-dove builds her nest.

And oft the weary traveller turns,
The sculptured stone to read,
Where Pity, bending o'er her tomb,
Laments the guilty deed.

And from her mournful hand displays
A long extended page,
That, warning, tells the dire effects
OF WILD AMBITIOUS RAGE.

SAY NOT THE BARD HAS TURNED OLD.



Tho' the winter of age wreathes her snow on his head,
And the blooming effulgence of summer is fled,
Tho' the voice that was sweet as the harp's softest string,
Be trem'lous and low as the zephyrs of spring,
Yet say not the Bard has turned old.

Tho' the casket that holds the rich jewel we prize,
Attracts not the gaze of inquisitive eyes ;
Yet the gem that's within may be lovely and bright,
As the smiles of the morn, or the stars of the night ;
Then say not the Bard has turned old.

When the tapers burn clear, and the goblet shines bright,
In the hall of his chief on a festival night,
I have smiled at the glance of his rapturous eye,
While the brim of the goblet laughed back in reply ;
Then say not the Bard has turned old.

When he sings of the valorous deeds that were done,
By his Clan or his Chief in the days that are gone,

His strains then are various—now rapid—now slow,
As he mourns for the dead, or exults o'er the foe ;

Then say not the Bard has turned old.

When Summer in gaudy profusion is dressed,
And the dew-drop hangs clear on the violet's breast,
I list with delight to his rapturous strain,
While the tale-telling echo returns it again ;

Then say not the Bard has turned old.

But not Summer's profusion alone can inspire
His soul in the song, or his hand on the lyre,
But rapid his numbers, and wilder they flow,
When the wintry winds rave o'er his mountains of snow ;

Then say not the Bard has turned old.

I have seen him elate when the black clouds were riven,
Terrific and wild by the thunder of heaven,
And smile at the billows that angrily rave,
Incessant and deep o'er the mariner's grave ;

Then say not the Bard has turned old.

When the eye that expresses the warmth of his heart,
Shall fail the benevolent wish to impart,—

When his blood shall be cold as the wintry wave,
 And silent his harp as the gloom of the grave,—
 Then say that the Bard has turned old.



THE OLD TREES.

*The following Lines were written immediately after the death
 of the last of three of the Author's most intimate friends.*

HAVE you seen the old tree that stands lone on the moor,
 With its branches all withered and bare ;
 Like a life-wearied wretch who keenly has felt
 The torturing pangs of despair.

Tho' the rank grass wave wild o'er the spot where they
 stood,
 Yet three kindly companions it knew ;
 Who exultingly spread their gay leaves to the sun,
 And drank of the nourishing dew.

So broad were their boughs, and so fresh were their leaves,
 And so kindly they mingled together,

That they dreamed not the sorrowful day was so near,
That would part them in anguish for ever.

But a blast from the heath like the fiat of fate,
Gave the loftiest tree to the wind,*
And left the disconsolate friends of its youth
To linger in sadness behind.

Soon the canker of care, like a worm in the bud,
Seized the tree that grew close by its side :†
And its green leaves grew pale, and its branches were few,
And it sickened—and withered—and died.

But the envious shaft that had destined their fate,
Had not finished the work it began,
For a poison was fixed in another fair tree,‡
And its span of existence is run.

And now the old tree that stands lone on the moor,
With its branches all withered and bare,
In solitude mourns for the friends of its youth,
The victim of anxious despair.

* Tannabill.

† Scadlock.

‡ Anderson.

DONALD CRAW.

Tune—Haud awa' frae me, Donald.

“ O ! Donald Craw, tell me a',
 Did you see him die, Donald ;
 Looked he kindly to the North,
 Ere he closed his e'e, Donald.
 Did he, wi' his dying breath,
 Speak o' love an' me, Donald,
 Did he bless the bonny bairn,
 That's smiling on my kneec, Donald.”

“ When the bluidy faught was owre,
 I fand him on the lee, Mary,
 Milky white his manly cheek,
 And death was in his e'e, Mary.
 I raised him kindly in my arms,
 I propt him wi' my kneec, Mary,
 Short and few the words he spak',
 But they were a' 'bout thee, Mary.

I dug his grave wi' friendly care,
 I sought nae helping han', Mary,
 Now sound he sleeps within his plaid,
 Upon a foreign lan', Mary.

This ring I fand upon his breast,
 A gift he gat frae thee, Mary,
 Now mak' the bonny gouden ring,
 A pledge o' love to me, Mary.

I ha'ena muckle wealth to gie,
 But a' I hae 'll be thine, Mary,
 The lowin' love that's at my heart,
 I'm sure I'll never tine, Mary.
 I'll be a father to your bairn,
 I'll aye be kind to thee, Mary,
 Cankered Care, nor scrimped Want,
 You'll never, never see, Mary."

"O haud awa', bide awa',
 Speak na sae to me, Donald,
 For I'll never wed again,
 Till the day I die, Donald.
 Fickle love may quickly change,
 But nae sic love is mine, Donald.
 Colin gat my virgin heart,
 An' it can ne'er be thine, Donald.

Weel I ken your manly worth,
 Your kind intent to me, Donald,

But a han' without a heart,
 Is no a gift for thee, Donald.
 Love is like the mountain stream,
 That rushes to the sea, Donald,
 Ever giving aye the same,
 While it has ought to gie, Donald."



HOWL ON, YE WILD WINDS.

Sung at the celebration of the Birth of Burns, January 1819.

Howl on, ye wild winds, o'er his hallowed grave,
 Thy music is sweet to the ear ;
 And lovely thy mountains, though mantled in snow,
 As the fragrant smile of the year.
 Yes, Winter, though icicles hang on thy brow,
 And nature disconsolate mourns ;
 Yet Scotia will ever exult in thy reign,
 For she owes thee the birth of a Burns.

When your bellowing tempests, incessant and deep,
 Terrificly howl through the sky,
 Do you visit a spot where his fame is unknown,
 A spot where 'twill wither and die.
 Yes, yes, the bright fame of the bard will decay,
 For nature itself will expire ;
 But the last lover's song, ere the wreck of mankind,
 Will echo his heavenly lyre.

F
O! I'LL TELL YOU THE HOUR.

Tune—Meeting of the Waters.

O! I'll tell you the hour that is dearest to me,
'Tis the hour when the sun dips his head in the sea,
'Tis the hour when the linnet retires to his rest,
And burnished with gold are the clouds of the west,
And burnished with gold are the clouds of the west.

O! this hallowed grove I will ever revere,
As the loveliest spot on creation's wide sphere,
For 'twas here that I first felt my bosom impressed,
With a passion as warm as the turtle-dove's nest,
With a passion as warm as the turtle-dove's nest.

Not friendship's soft tear gushing warm from the eye,
Is so dear to my heart as her languishing sigh—
Will I tell you the cause that I love her so well?
No, no, 'tis a cause that no mortal can tell,
No, no, 'tis a cause that no mortal can tell.


It is not her eye, mild, expressive, and blue,
It is not her cheek of vermillion hue,

It is not her breath sweet and fragrant as May ;
No, no, it is something far other than they,
No, no, it is something far other than they.

She is lovely as light—she is guileless as truth—
Has the wisdom of age, and the fondness of youth,
Her thoughts are as pure, and her virtue as fair,
As a chronicled saint at his evening prayer,
As a chronicled saint at his evening prayer.

She's the spring of my pleasure—the source of my woe,
Like my shadow she haunts me wherever I go,
When I kneel to my god (may the fault be forgiven,)
I implore her for bliss, and mistake her for heaven,
I implore her for bliss, and mistake her for heaven.

Cease, cease, throbbing heart, till the day-lights decline,
She is true to her faith, and she then will be thine ;
Then let fortune her frowns and her favour divide,
When an angel is mine I need nothing beside,
When an angel is mine I need nothing beside.



I'M WITHERING LIKE A SICKLY FLOWER.

Tune—O let me in this ae night.

I'm withering like a sickly flower,
 That bends beneath the Winter's power,
 When angry winds tempestuous lour,
 An' ye're the cause o't a', jo.

Then, Jessy, hear my ardent prayer,
 As guileless as affection's tear,
 O wilt thou ever be my dear,
 And I'll be thine for aye, jo.

Lang, lang I've now been doomed to prove,
 The pangs of unrequited love;
 Let pity now thy bosom move,
 And tak' me for thy ain, jo.

Then, Jessy, hear my ardent prayer, &c.

My heart has never known to stray,
 For thou hast been its guiding ray,
 Its dreams by night—its thoughts by day—
 Then tak' me for thy ain, jo.

Then, Jessy, hear my ardent prayer, &c.

Though doomed in cruel Fortune's spite,
 To toil frae morn till dreary night,
 Thy smile will a' my ills requite,
 Gin ye were but my ain, jo.
 Then, Jessy, hear my ardent prayer, &c.

Would Fortune spread her treasured store,
 Give wealth and power—and promise more,
 I'd spurn it all, though tripled o'er,
 Without thy witching smile, jo.
 Then, Jessy, hear my ardent prayer, &c.



WHEN ANCIENT BRITONS RUDELY TROD.

Sung at the celebration of the Birth of Burns.

WHEN ancient Britons rudely trod
 Throughout our favourite isle,
 Nor knew the worth, nor felt the force,
 Of Beauty's magic smile ;
 War's rugged face alone had charms,
 To warm the patriot breast,
 But every foe, from every land,
 Proud Scotia's worth confessed.

“ Then this the charter—the charter of the land,
 “ And guardian angels sung the strain,”
 Hail, honoured SCOTIA ! blessed land, for ever be
 The sacred seat of LIBERTY.

Then came the honoured minstrel bard,
 In ages more refined,
 And bade the generous warmth of love,
 Possess the pliant mind ;
 The song that first in lordly halls,
 The captive passions led,
 Spread o'er the land, and found a home
 Within the peasant's shed.

“ Then this the charter—the charter of the land,
 “ And guardian angels sung the strain,”
 Hail, honoured SCOTIA ! blessed land, for ever be
 The sacred seat of MINSTRELSY.

When in his low parental cot,
 The infant Burns reclined,
 The fretful clamours of his heart,
 Hushed by the wint'ry wind ;
 The minstrel muse, to Scotia dear,
 Hung o'er the babe and smiled,

Imbued his heart with heavenly fire,
And nursed the darling child.

“ Then this the charter—the charter of the land,
“ And guardian angels sung the strain,”
Hail, honoured SCOTIA ! blessed land, for ever be
The sacred seat of POETRY.

Hail SCOTIA ! dear romantic land,
Though cold thy climate be,
And turbulent the angry winds
That lash thy northern sea ;
Yet still, beneath thy hallowed clime,
The minstrel muse is found,
And every stream and every dale
Is sacred classic ground.

Sing loud the minstrel's fame,
His be an honoured name,
To latest time :
His be the bright reward,
A wondering world's regard,
Dear to the patriot bard,
In every clime.

J. Neilson, Printer.

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